

**SUMMARY OF THE
ON-SITE ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
MARCH 20, 2002**

The On-Site Assessment Committee of the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) met by teleconference on Wednesday, March 20, 2002, at 1:00 p.m., Eastern Standard Time (EST). Its Chair Mr. Alfredo Sotomayor, of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, led the meeting. The Agenda is given in Attachment A. A list of Action Items generated during this meeting is given in Attachment B. A List of Participants is given in Attachment C. *The purpose of the meeting was to address items of importance identified in the Agenda.*

INTRODUCTION

Mr. Sotomayor called the meeting to order by taking attendance and reviewing the agenda.

TOPICS OF AGENDA

Agenda Repair

Mr. Sotomayor requested deferring discussion on the consolidation of Appendices C and D to the next teleconference.

Approval of March 06, 2002 Minutes

The teleconference minutes from March 06, 2002, were reviewed and approved as written.

Announcements

Mr. David Friedman reported that a draft plan for implementing EPA Information Quality Guidelines would be distributed by April 2002 and would be effective October 01, 2002. He gave the address of a website that highlights six separate issues for public review, comments, and suggestions. The initial comment period concludes on March 22, 2002.

Status of Action Items

- Mr. Sotomayor reminded committee members to send comments regarding Confidential Business Information (CBI) to Mr. Richard Sheibley no later than March 29, 2002. He will prepare new draft language for review and discussion at the next scheduled On-Site Assessment teleconference.

- The committee will discuss consolidating Appendices C and D at the teleconference of April 3, 2002.
- Mr. Sotomayor will send the On-Site Assessment Committee's response to Dr. Jackson of the NELAP AA's SOP Subgroup.
- The Assessor Forum Group met by teleconference March 8th.

Assessor Forum

Electronic Forum - Mr. Friedman updated the committee regarding the two options under consideration for an electronic assessor forum: (1) through the Internet, or (2) by the telephone. If the forum is done over the Internet, a notice goes to the invitees asking for registration. Presentations to be viewed would be sent to a facilitator and loaded onto a server. At a designated time, the facilitator opens the meeting, participants log onto a particular website where they can view the documentation. The participants will also be able to send comments and/or questions in real time to the facilitator to be distributed to all the online participants.

If the phone option is pursued, there is a restriction to the number of lines that the EPA bridge can handle; however, it is fairly inexpensive to do this. The optimal number of phone lines that can be dedicated is about 40. If several participants could attend in one room, this would reduce the number of required connections. Both approaches, the phone and the Internet, are compatible.

Mr. Friedman has been in touch with the responsible parties that manage electronic conferencing for EPA. He will make a visit to their offices to see a demonstration and obtain additional information for the On-Site Assessment Committee's consideration.

The On-Site Assessment Committee was enthusiastic about the electronic forum for assessors. Mr. Wayne Davis requested that Mr. Friedman attend the next NELAC Board of Directors' meeting to brief them on the topic. Mr. Friedman will seek endorsement of the electronic forum concept from the Board, clarifying that we are in the preliminary stages and that we will have more information on logistics and topics later. Mr. Davis will arrange including discussion on this topic at the next Board of Directors meeting.

Obtaining Issues from Assessors – Mr. Sotomayor explained that the Assessors Forum Group felt that there was a need for soliciting concerns that assessors may have regarding the NELAC Standards and their interpretation. The Assessors Forum Group felt that assessors might not necessarily be candid about concerns publicly. The group felt that Mr. Sotomayor could request that assessors send him, via e-mail, their concerns and questions about the NELAC Standards. He would in turn compile and categorize the concerns, depersonalize them to make them anonymous, and then use these as discussion points during an assessor forum.

The On-Site Assessment Committee was enthusiastic about this approach to compiling assessors' concerns. Mr. Daniel Hickman will inquire whether the NELAP Accrediting Authorities are comfortable with the proposal.

At the next teleconference, the On-Site Assessment Committee will consider some of the concerns on logistics, format, and content of the assessors' electronic forum for possible presentation at the NELAC Board of Directors' meeting.

Consolidation of Appendices C and D

Mr. Sotomayor deferred this topic for discussion at the next scheduled teleconference.

NEXT STEPS

The next steps are captured in the list of Action Items in Attachment C.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no other issues to discuss, the meeting was adjourned.

NEXT TELECONFERENCE

The next teleconference is scheduled for April 03, at 1:00 p.m., EST.

**AGENDA
ON-SITE ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
MARCH 20, 2002**

- Call-In/Roll Call
- Agenda Repair
- Approval of March 6 Minutes
- Announcements
- Status of Action Items
- Assessor Forum
 - > Electronic Forum
 - > Obtaining Issues from Assessors
- Consolidation of Appendices C and D
- Next Steps/Adjournment

**ACTION ITEMS
ON-SITE ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
MARCH 20, 2002**

Item No.	Action	Date to be Completed
1	Send comments on CBI language to Mr. Shiebley. (Committee)	03/29/02
2	Redraft language on CBI section of Chapter 3 for discussion. (Sheibley)	04/03/02
3	Report on efforts to consolidate Appendices C and D. (Uhlfelder, Hall, Sheibley)	04/03/02
4	Send Committee's response to NELAP AAs SOP subgroup recommendations. (Sotomayor)	03/29/02
5	Compile a list of concerns on logistics, content, and format of assessors' electronic forum. (Sotomayor)	04/03/02
6	Request discussion of assessors' electronic forum at the next NELAC Board of Directors meeting. (Davis)	ASAP
7	Discuss assessors' electronic forum at NELAC Board of Directors. (Friedman)	04/11/02

**PARTICIPANTS
ON-SITE ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
MARCH 20, 2002**

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